

Centennial Celebrations

ROYAL PAPUA YACHT CLUB

LIFE MEMBERS

CLAUD WILLIAM CLARK



Claud was born in the NSW country town of Condobolin in 1933. His secondary education was at Leeton High School however he matriculated by correspondence in PNG before undertaking a Bachelor of Economic studies by correspondence with the University of Queensland.

Claud worked in engineering workshops in Sydney while studying at the Diesel Engineering College but after deciding it was not the career path he wanted, he drove hire cars in Sydney. Among his many clients were celebrities Victoria Shaw, a Golden Globe award winner, and Shirley Bassey on her first visit to Australia. Both ladies were charming and unaffected by fame; fun and a pleasure to meet. Claud then joined the ANZ Bank and remained there until he came to PNG.

A sense of adventure drew Claud to PNG and he arrived in 1961 expecting to go to a remote out station but was met at the airport and told he'd be working in the Public Service Commission where he eventually became the CEO. He then worked for the Public Service Board and the National Computer Centre and after 15 years he left the public service for the private sector. Claud joined Associated Management Services P/L and then Coopers & Lybrand and finally started Pacific Management P/L in 1988 where he remained until his retirement in 1998.

Claud joined the RPYC in 1964 and remained a member until he left the country. Over those 34 years Claud was involved in all aspects of the Club.

Claud began sailing in home built Herons and also sailed Fireballs and of course the "A" class which enabled him to represent PNG in several internationally renowned events including:

- the Admirals Cup of 1983 in England which at the time was recognized as the unofficial world championship of ocean yacht racing. The PNG team placed equal third in the major event, the Fastnet Race, beating eleven of the world's top yachting teams including England, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France. The media at the time described it as PNG's greatest sporting achievement.
- the Southern Cross Cup of 1985, one event of which was the Sydney to Hobart race and
- he was a member of the victorious crew of "Di Hard" in the Coral Sea Classic and the Yule Island races.

Claud was Race Director of the Coral Sea Classic events from 1987 to 1995. This was an international sailing event that, at its peak, saw 28 yachts and 170 sailors competing. Claud was responsible for the overall management and organization of these events. In 1989 Claud was awarded our Yachtsman of the Year award.

Claud was Commodore of the RPYC in 1981 and 1983. During that time, he was responsible for the construction of the old Club Groyne area which gave the club its first all-weather anchorage. The decision to construct the marina was taken, finances were arranged and a 100 berth marina took shape.

Claud was instrumental in introducing the concept of Family Membership to encourage and formalize families to be involved in the Club and this resulted in a major increase in quality membership.

The focus of Claud's attention then moved to the general administration of the sport of yachting. Taking charge of the PNG Yachting Association (PNGYA) in 1984, a position he held for 7 years, Claud became the representative for all sailing activities throughout PNG to the PNG Sports Federation; PNG National Olympic Committee; PNG Sports Commission and the PNG South Pacific Games Committee. He was also the PNG Representative to the International Yacht Racing Union for 8 years.

Claud left PNG in 1998 to pursue his retirement. Looking back there are three things Claud is proud of accomplishing during his tenure as Commodore: the first was changing the social atmosphere at the club to make women and families feel comfortable and welcome; the second was raising the membership numbers to more than 1,200 members and the third was leading the negotiating team in discussions with the bank which resulted in financing the construction of the club's first marina.

One of his favorite memories was sailing down to Milne Bay. He anchored overnight at Suau Island and the children came out in canoes. They handed up fresh fruit and vegetables from their gardens and refused anything in return saying the food was a gift from their parents. It was a further demonstration of how welcoming, generous, and kind the PNG village people are.

